

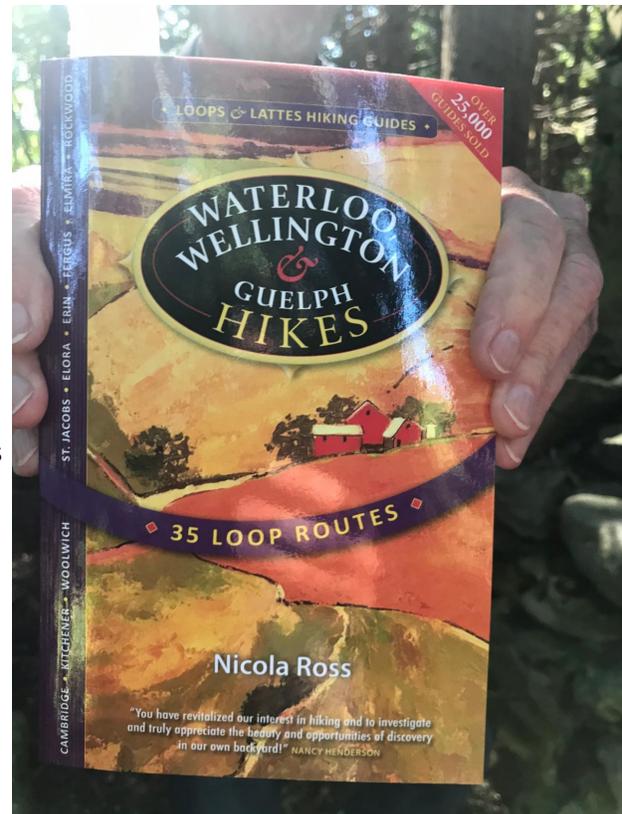


Through ecological restoration we can restore our own connection to the natural world.

A Gift During a Pandemic

The vision for the Ignatius Old-Growth project 'lands' is to be a gift to the whole community; for the people that walk and learn from the land and the animals that call this sanctuary home. No other time has this been more evident than during the pandemic with the need for fresh air, exercise and, quite simply, feeding the soul. It is great to see that so many new hikers have discovered these trails for the first time; many of them using the *Waterloo, Wellington & Guelph Hikes* book as a guide.

Thank you to all who have made trail donations and to the volunteers, especially the teenagers from the Cross Creek community, that have helped us take care of this precious gift.



Wholistic Restoration - A two-eyed approach healing the 'land'



Photo - Martin Tamlyn

Like many other organizations, all the in-person programs at the Jesuit Centre were cancelled this year. These included the Loyola House in-person retreats, The Ignatius Farm's community days, the majority of intern's farm visits and the Old-Growth Forest Project's '*Care of Our Common Home*' School Programs. Thanks to the dedication and creativity amongst the staff at the Centre, many of our offerings were made available online. These included: The New Farmer Training Program, Videos for Holy Week celebrations and currently open for registration our [Virtual Retreats](#).

Thanks to funding from a [Ontario Trillium Foundation SEED Grant](#) we have been busy developing our new Wholistic Ecological Restoration Program that will be also available online and hopefully in person by the fall 2021.

The Program

Acknowledging the project 'lands' sits on the traditional territory of the NeutralAnishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples and informed by the inherent values of respect, relationship, reciprocity and responsibility to Indigenous ways of seeing, doing and knowing, we strive to continually learn how to maintain an wholistic approach to caring for our common home. This is prioritized through providing opportunities for people to nurture their relationships with the Earth and to learn the skills, knowledge and experience needed to heal it. Through the braiding of Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, we are given a more complete picture and narrative of how integrally we are connected to planet and each other.

We have just completed the first accompanying video that explores how we get to know the 'land' and build a relationship to it.

[Wholistic Restoration - 'Coming to Know the Land' video \(38 mins\)](#)

Remembering Spring Awakes! 2010 - 2018



Photo of The Odine Chorus courtesy of Brenda Lewis

Entwining Performance Arts with Restoration Ecology

A Personal Recollection by Sue Smith Co-Founder & Co-Artistic Director, Spring Awakes!

Your footsteps fall softly on the dirt trail as you pass by trout lilies, white and red trilliums in bloom, and bright green fiddle heads slowly unfurling underneath the canopy of stately old cedars and spruce....as you round the corner, there in the river you see three empty music stands...from the bank, you watch in silence as three horn players, clad in hip waders, converge at the stands and play an homage to the river, then wade away in separate directions...you move on... around the next corner...in a grove of beech trees is a group of singers dressed in white, attended by painters working silently at their feet, depicting the understory up and onto their clothes as they sing the poetry of Kathleen Raine's "Spell of Creation"...at another turn of the trail, you watch as a woman in a long velvet gown silently greets you and then suddenly hikes herself up onto a branch of a very large pine tree. She continues to climb up, then sing, her soprano voice soaring throughout the forest canopy and dueting with the birds of spring...

Ignatius Jesuit Centre is a place of peace for me; a place of rejuvenation, inspiration and hope. The centre blazed into my consciousness during the community campaign to stop the building of a Big-box store adjacent to the property, and a few years later, it offered the perfect crucible in which to blend some significant yet disparate elements of my life which, when woven together with care, turned into a community based celebration of spring which in turn raised funds to support the Old-Growth Forest. Music. Trees. Performance. Community. Event Planning. Environmental Stewardship. The convergence of these several pathways in my life, when combined with the energies of enthusiastic co-creators, resulted in "Spring Awakes!"

To read the full recollection click [here](#).

To view the slide-show click [here](#).



Celebrating Spring Awakes! 2010-2018 - Photo slideshow

Restoring Meadows

Thanks to funding from The County of Wellington's Habitat Restoration Program we were able to purchase and plant over a thousand dry meadow wildflowers this spring. Conveniently, we were able to source these plants from [Origin Native Plant Nursery](#) now based at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre! This planting is a project usually undertaken by the Grade 4 students from the Wellington Catholic School Board but unfortunately like many programs this year it was unable to happen. While watering these wildflowers it struck me how unfamiliar I was with their names, mostly because I never or rarely see these particular plants in the landscape around me anymore. With over 300 native wildflowers observed on the Ignatius Old-Growth Project 'Lands' that flower from April to October, I feel so grateful to be able to protect, celebrate and witness this little bio-diverse piece of heaven.



Other departments helping out, Wild Bergamot, Michigan Lily, Blazing Star, Black Swallowtail.

Photos - Martin Tamlyn

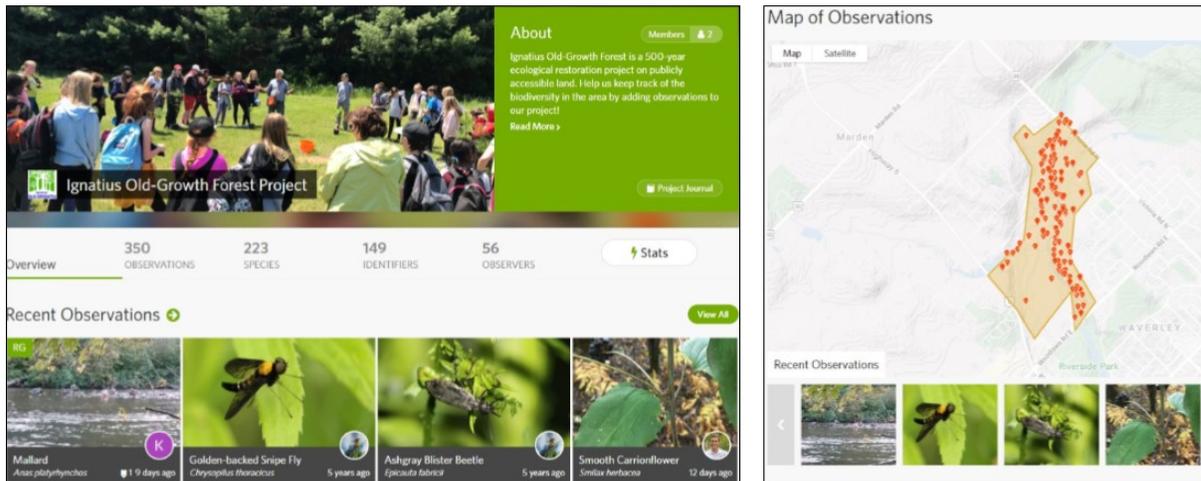
Help Us Monitor and Celebrate Bio-diversity

The Old-Growth Forest Project now has its own page on iNaturalist, a free citizen science app for naturalists supported by the Royal Ontario Museum. You can download the app on your phone and submit observations to the project and help us monitor wildlife and plants in the area. Any observations you make while on the grounds of the OGF project will automatically be added to the main project page.

iNaturalist is a fun app to get to know the forest as you walk through it. It will give you suggested identifications for plants, mushrooms, animals and insects. Users can verify your identification or suggest another one of their own. By posting observations you will be helping us better understand the forest and keep track of the biodiversity in the area.

Here's a link to the [project page](#) so you can see what others have posted:

To get started, just download the iNaturalist app from the Google Play or Apple App store and create an account!

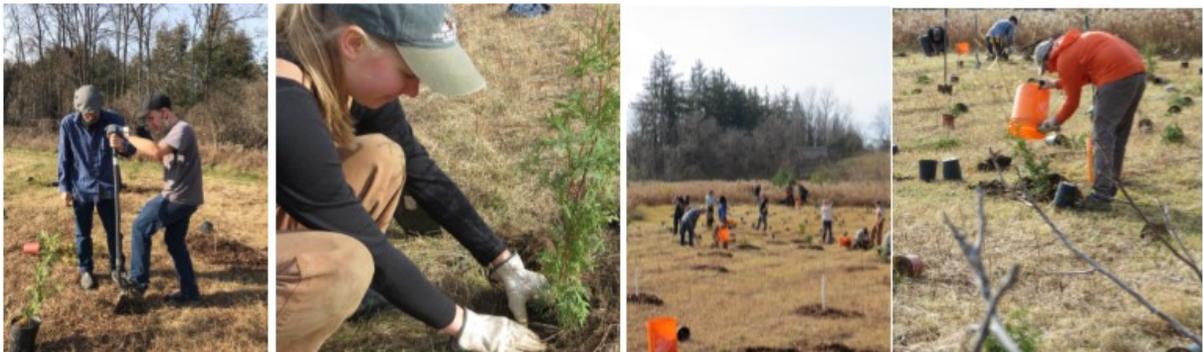




I feel blessed to witness that our local beavers, historically abundant in this area, are still here and hard at work. Even though they felled some cedars on trail with trail markers on them to build their dam and lodge! The impact to water levels so far have not raised any safety concerns, and the GRCA will continue to monitor the flow the at Victoria Road bridge end of the Speed river.

Working Together

On a very unseasonably warm day in November, Ignatius staff rallied round to help each other (as we often do) and put another 250 trees in the ground! Such a perfect physically distanced and positive way to spend time together. Thanks everyone and blessings on the season.



If you would like to support our work restoring nature, maintaining trails and inspiring the future carers of our common home, please donate below.

[MAKE A DONATION](#)

[Subscribe here](#)



Ignatius Old-Growth Forest Project

oldgrowthforest@ignatiusguelph.ca
<http://www.ignatiusguelph.ca>



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